



CRAIG HICKMAN 2017-05-31

DELEUZE/GUATTARI: 'STOP THE WORLD!'

MASHINES,
PHILOFICTION

CASTANEDA, DELEUZE, DELEUZE/GUATTARI, DRUGS, ESCAPE, STOP THE WORLD, THOUSAND
PLATEAUS

One of the things of profound interest in Castaneda's books, under the influence of drugs, or other things, and of a change of atmosphere, is precisely that they show how the Indian manages to combat the mechanisms of interpretation and instill in the disciple a presignifying semiotic, or even an asignifying diagram: Stop! You're making me tired! Experiment, don't signify and interpret! Find your own places, territorializations, deterritorializations, regime, lines of flight!

—Deleuze / Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*

Most of us live in a box, a black box, a reality system of which we assume we know everything but in fact know nothing at all. This notion of 'stopping the world', of countering the hegemonic reality system, of coming up against circumstances 'alien to the flow' of normalization in which most of our life is seen as a automatic process in which we act as sleeper agents in a world controlled by the thought police of some nefarious religious organization. All this is the truth of our lives in the world today! Most of the fringe systems of thought underlying our world history, the magical systems that run counter to the hegemonic order of signs that create our daily world have been anathematized and tabooed by the State or what some now love to call the Cathedral (Moldbug/Land). The Cathedral is the subsumption of politics into propaganda. It tends — as it develops — to convert all administrative problems into public relations challenges. A solution — actual or prospective — is a successful *management of perceptions*. (see Land)

Listen to Deleuze/Guattari again: *'Stopping the world' was indeed an appropriate rendition of certain states of awareness in which the reality of everyday life is altered because the flow of interpretation, which ordinarily runs uninterruptedly, has been stopped by a set of circumstances alien to the flow.*" What Land said above is that our perception of reality is managed by a system of experts, a technocracy of academic, political, socio-cultural, media-tainment machines that command and control our *perceptions* – our awareness of the reality matrix within which we move and breath day by day.

D&G tell us that we are in a social formation, then ask us to see how it is stratified for us and in us and at the place where we are; then descend from the strata to the deeper assemblage within which we are held; gently tip the assemblage, making it pass over to the side of the plane of consistency. The moment you do this you're awakened to the other side of the propaganda system that

has entrapped you in its meshes for so long. Or, as D&G will put it, you'll see the "connection of desires, conjunction of flows, continuum of intensities".¹

Each of us lives in a machine, a bubble land of thought and desire, and as we move about the world we plug ourselves into other machines like ourselves that have been normalized or even hypernormalized by the cultural systems that have educated us into the collective assemblage of this civilization (BwO: Body-without-Organs). D&G will take the work of Carlos Castaneda as an exemplary example of breaking away from the reality matrix of one's cultural prison:

Castaneda describes a long process of experimentation (it makes little difference whether it is with peyote or other things): let us recall for the moment how the Indian forces him first to find a "place," already a difficult operation, then to find "allies," and then gradually to give up interpretation, to construct flow by flow and segment by segment lines of experimentation, becoming-animal, becoming-molecular, etc. For the BwO is all of that: necessarily a Place, necessarily a Plane, necessarily a Collectivity (assembling elements, things, plants, animals, tools, people, powers, and fragments of all of these; for it is not "my" body without organs, instead the "me" (moi) is on it, or what remains of me, unalterable and changing in form, crossing thresholds). (Kindle Locations 3471-3479).

It's this slow process of unwinding the black box we've been bound too for so long, of awakening to a wider frame of reference, of de-programming the reality systems that have locked us in a world of social and political lies and propaganda. In reading such works as Castaneda's D&G will admit it doesn't matter if one believes it is neither an actual ethnographic tale of a real Shaman named Don Juan, or if it is rather just a meta-fictional parable written by a literary wizard steeped in the magical literature of such worlds. Doubt or not what is important is the truth underlying the fictions. As they say of the Fourth book in the series:

The fourth book, *Tales of Power*, is about the living distinction between the "Tonal" and the "Nagual." The tonal seems to cover many disparate things: It is the organism, and also all that is organized and organizing; but it is also signification, and all that is signifying or signified, all that is susceptible to interpretation, explanation, all that is memorizable in the form of something recalling something else; finally, it is the Self (Moi), the subject, the historical, social, or individual person, and the corresponding feelings. In short, the tonal is everything, including God, the judgment of God, since it "makes up the rules by which it apprehends the world. So, in a manner of speaking, it creates the world." Yet the tonal is only an island. For the nagual is also everything. And it is the same everything, but under such conditions that the body without organs has replaced the organism and experimentation has replaced all interpretation, for which it no longer has any use. Flows of intensity, their fluids, their fibers, their continuums and conjunctions of affects, the wind, fine segmentation, microperceptions, have replaced the world of the subject. Becomings, becomings-animal, becomings-molecular, have replaced history, individual or general. In fact, the tonal is not as disparate as it seems: it includes all of the strata and everything that can be ascribed to the strata, the organization of the organism, the interpretations and explanations of the signifiable, the movements of subjectification. The nagual, on the contrary, dismantles the strata. It is no longer an organism that functions but a BwO that is constructed. No longer are there acts to explain, dreams or fantasies to interpret, childhood memories to recall, words to make signify; instead, there are colors and sounds, becomings and intensities (and when you become-dog, don't ask if the dog you are playing with is a dream or a reality, if it is "your goddam mother" or something else entirely). There is no longer a Self [Moi] that feels, acts, and recalls; there is "a glowing fog, a dark yellow mist" that has affects and experiences movements, speeds. The important thing is not to dismantle the tonal by destroying it all of a sudden. You have to diminish it, shrink it, clean it, and that only at certain moments. You have to keep it in order to survive, to ward off the assault of the nagual. For a nagual that erupts, that destroys the tonal, a body without organs that shatters all the strata, turns immediately into a body of nothingness, pure self-destruction whose only outcome is death: "The tonal must be protected at any cost." (Kindle Locations 3480-3501).

Put it in Kantian terms of phenomenal/noumenon distinction, the tonal is the realm of phenomenon that we've been taught to apprehend by the supposed categories of the Mind, while the nagual is the noumenal sphere of being and becoming that is situated outside the prescribed *temenos* or magic circle of reality constructed by our culture. Those who break down the barriers between these two systems, who forcibly vacate and destroy the walls between these two realms end up locked away in asylums under the rubric of a disease we term schizophrenia. Those who will as D&G propose slowly dismantle the tonal step by step, methodically decoding its lies, its propaganda systems; systems that have locked us into a prison house of the mind, where we've been (hyper)normalized to believe it is the only Real world follow the Greater Path of schizophrenizing reality: without becoming schizophrenics in the diseased sense. It bares repeating you must keep and be aware of the tonal (phenomenal) during this de-programming process: "You have to keep it in order to survive, to ward off the assault of the nagual [noumenon/noumenal]. For a nagual that erupts, that destroys the tonal, a body without organs that shatters all the strata, turns immediately into a body of nothingness, pure self-destruction whose only outcome is death: "The tonal must be protected at any cost." [my italics]

This notion of de-programming mainstream reality, of entering a special place, plane, or collective system or agonistic relation to the tonal has been at the heart of a whole history of magical practices from the ancient Shamans, to the Oracles and Dionysian festivals or Mysteries of Greece and other ancient pagan systems, to the Voodooan soul-riders of certain African systems, to the multifarious mystical orders from Sufi, Gnostic, Apophatic, and other systems within the monotheistic world system down to our own time of syncretism. Nothing new here, only that certain respectable and academic scholars such as Deleuze and others have opened their discourse to these ancient systems, allowed them to be brought back into the light of scholarly and experimental modes of becoming as ways of preparing us to de-program the reality matrix of our current malaise.

That we live in a stratified and codified reality system is at the heart of D&G's diagnosis, and that there is a way, a path out, a 'line of flight' or path of destratification and deterritorialization of this prison house of the mind is also true. As they'll tell us,

The study of the dangers of each line is the object of pragmatics or schizoanalysis, to the extent that it undertakes not to represent, interpret, or symbolize, but only to make maps and draw lines, marking their mixtures as well as their distinctions. (Kindle Locations 4751)

Like two ancient Magus's D&G were slowly developing a methodology to de-program the reality system of modern capitalist society and civilization. They'd speak of the dangers facing anyone who would seek a way out of this control system:

According to Nietzsche's Zarathustra and Castaneda's Indian Don Juan, there are three or even four dangers: first, Fear, then Clarity, then Power, and finally the great Disgust, the longing to kill and to die, the Passion for abolition.

Speaking to Fear: "We can guess what fear is. We are always afraid of losing. Our security, the great molar organization that sustains us, the arborescences we cling to, the binary machines that give us a well-defined status, the resonances we enter into, the system of overcoding that dominates us — we desire all that."

Speaking to Clarity: "The second danger, Clarity, seems less obvious. Clarity, in effect, concerns the molecular. Once again, everything is involved, even perception, even the semiotic regime, but this time on the second line. Castaneda illustrates, for example, the existence of a molecular perception to which drugs give us access (but so many things can be drugs): we attain a visual and sonorous microperspective revealing spaces and voids, like holes in the molar structure. That is precisely what clarity is: the distinctions that appear in what used to seem full, the holes in what used to be compact; and conversely, where just before we saw end points of clear-cut segments, now there are indistinct fringes, encroachments, overlappings, migrations, acts of segmentation that no longer coincide with the rigid segmentarity. Everything now appears supple, with holes in fullness, nebulas in forms, and flutter in lines. Everything has the clarity of the microscope."

Speaking to Power: "Power (Pouvoir) is the third danger, because it is on both lines simultaneously. It stretches from the rigid segments with their overcoding and resonance to the fine segmentations with their diffusion and interactions, and back again. Every man of power jumps from one line to the other, alternating between a petty and a lofty style, the rogue's style and the grandiloquent style, drugstore demagoguery and the imperialism of the high-ranking government man. But this whole chain and web of power is immersed in a world of mutant flows that eludes them. It is precisely its impotence that makes power so dangerous. The man of power will always want to stop the lines of flight, and to this end to trap and stabilize the mutation machine in the overcoding machine. But he can do so only by creating a void, in other words, by first stabilizing the overcoding machine itself by containing it within the local assemblage charged with effectuating it, in short, by giving the assemblage the dimensions of the machine. This is what takes place in the artificial conditions of totalitarianism or the "closed vessel.""

Speaking to Disgust: "But there is a fourth danger as well, and this is the one that interests us most, because it concerns the lines of flight themselves. We may well have presented these lines as a sort of mutation or creation drawn not only in the imagination but also in the very fabric of social reality; we may well have attributed to them the movement of the arrow and the speed of an absolute — but it would be oversimplifying to believe that the only risk they fear and confront is allowing themselves to be recaptured in the end, letting themselves be sealed in, tied up, reknotted, reterritorialized. They themselves emanate a strange despair, like an odor of death and immolation, a state of war from which one returns broken: they have their own dangers distinct from the ones previously discussed. This is exactly what led Fitzgerald to say: "I had a feeling that I was standing at twilight on a deserted range, with an empty rifle in my hands and the targets down. No problem set — simply a silence with only the sound of my own breathing."

Like the Shamans of old D&G were developing a cartography of escape and flight from the reality matrix of our cultural malaise, developing techniques that would allow the wary victim of the dark and nefarious systems that regulated every thought, every action of our normalized lives. It is not an easy path to follow, and this schizophrenizing process as they observe is fraught with a multitude of dangers. The enemy has set traps, and even as we dissolve the barriers the greatest enemy is our own mind which will defend its integrity against any and all forms of assault on the logic and reason of its current enmeshed prison system. It knows nothing else, the brain is trapped by the very cultural systems of logic and reason that have adapted it to the environment within which it was born and lives. Exit is fraught with little success, few and far between are those who have escaped and returned to tell the tale.

For those within the Reality Matrix such exists and escapes are sheer madness, and the reality police who govern these systems lay in wait for any and all who would seek a way out. One's family, friends, associates will all believe you are going mad, that you need help and will try to dissuade you from this path. And, they will even seek out the authorities in such matters to trap you and bring you back into the fold. Escape is not for the weak minded. This is why there is a need for support groups, for those who have already surmounted the barriers of the mainstream reality matrix and developed a circle of friends and accomplices.

Some might see this as a fall into irrationalism and cultic madness. And, many of such groups that have fallen by the wayside, entered into the irrational zones of fake or self-taught masters have truly gone the way of diseased minds, schizophrenics of a mental aberration. One could recite the litany of such groups that have even led to mass suicide in the name of some false

prophet and leader's whim. As D&G admit there is no assured path out, no exit or mapped system without dangers. This is why one must be careful.

Breaking down the walls of logic and reason as attested even in the great poets of the 19th and early 20th Century is not only difficult but can lead not to break through but to break down and failure to complete the task. As D&G tell us,

If the experimentation with drugs has left its mark on everyone, even nonusers, it is because it changed the perceptive coordinates of space-time and introduced us to a universe of microperceptions in which becomings-molecular take over where becomings-animal leave off. Carlos Castaneda's books clearly illustrate this evolution, or rather this involution, in which the affects of a becoming-dog, for example, are succeeded by those of a becoming-molecular, microperceptions of water, air, etc. A man totters from one door to the next and disappears into thin air: "All I can tell you is that we are fluid, luminous beings made of fibers." All so-called initiatory journeys include these thresholds and doors where becoming itself becomes, and where one changes becoming depending on the "hour" of the world, the circles of hell, or the stages of a journey that sets scales, forms, and cries in variation. From the howling of animals to the wailing of elements and particles.(Kindle Locations 5193-5199).

KNIGHTS OF NARCOTICS

Are there not even knights of narcotics, in the sense that faith is a drug (in a way very different from the sense in which religion is an opiate)?

—Deleuze / Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*

From the sixties through the end of the seventies I experimented with various psychedelics, yoga, magical systems, New Age occult and other abstruse systems that that era propagated into popular culture and mythology from music to cultic and non-cultic inroads. All of these pursuits opened the doors of perception as Huxley in his famous book would opine. As D&G would ask: "Are there not even knights of narcotics, in the sense that faith is a drug (in a way very different from the sense in which religion is an opiate)? These knights claim that drugs, under necessary conditions of caution and experimentation, are inseparable from the deployment of a plane. And on this plane not only are becomings-woman, becomings-animal, becomings-molecular, becomings-imperceptible conjugated, but the imperceptible itself becomes necessarily perceived at the same time as perception becomes necessarily molecular: arrive at holes, microintervals between matters, colors and sounds engulfing lines of flight, world lines, lines of transparency and intersection.(Kindle Locations 5907-5912)

Drugs give the unconscious the immanence and plane that psychoanalysis has consistently botched.

Deleuze / Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*

As D&G would explain "The Americans of the beat generation had already embarked on this path, and spoke of a molecular revolution specific to drugs. Then came Castaneda's broad synthesis." Speaking of drugs D&G say this,

It is our belief that the issue of drugs can be understood only at the level where desire directly invests perception, and perception becomes molecular at the same time as the imperceptible is perceived. Drugs then appear as the agent of this becoming. This is where pharmacoanalysis would come in, which must be both compared and contrasted to psychoanalysis. For psychoanalysis must be taken simultaneously as a model, a contrasting approach, and a betrayal. Psychoanalysis can be taken as a model of reference because it was able, with respect to essentially affective phenomena, to construct the schema of a specific causality divorced from ordinary social or psychological generalities. But this schema still relies on a plane of organization that can never be apprehended in itself, that is always concluded from something else, that is always inferred, concealed from the system of perception: it is called the Unconscious. ***Thus the plane of the Unconscious remains a plane of transcendence guaranteeing, justifying, the existence of psychoanalysis and the necessity of its interpretations. This plane of the Unconscious stands in molar opposition to the perception-consciousness system, and because desire must be translated onto this plane, it is itself linked to gross molarities, like the submerged part of an iceberg*** (the Oedipal structure, or the rock of castration). The imperceptible thus remains all the more imperceptible because it is opposed to the perceived in a dualism machine. Everything is different on the plane of consistency or immanence, which is necessarily perceived in its own right in the course of its construction: *experimentation replaces interpretation, now molecular, nonfigurative, and nonsymbolic, the unconscious as such is given in microperceptions; desire directly invests the field of perception, where the imperceptible appears as the perceived object of desire itself, "the nonfigurative of desire."* The unconscious no longer designates the hidden principle of the transcendent plane of organization, but the process of the immanent plane of consistency as it appears on itself in the course of its construction. *For the unconscious must be constructed, not rediscovered. There is no longer a conscious-unconscious dualism machine, because the unconscious is, or rather is produced, there where consciousness goes, carried by the plane.* *Drugs give the unconscious the immanence and plane that psychoanalysis has consistently botched* (perhaps the famous cocaine episode marked a turning point that forced Freud to renounce a direct approach to the unconscious).(Kindle Locations 5936-5954) [italics mine]

The tonal and nagual of Castaneda is nothing but this conscious/unconscious division that must be breached, but not too quickly nor destroyed lest one ends in madness. "We are all too familiar with the dangers of the line of flight, and with its ambiguities. The risks are ever-present, but it is always possible to have the good fortune of avoiding them." (ibid.)

In Schizoanalysis D&G were seeking a therapy that would free us from the clutches of the capitalist reality system, one that would guide us into a wider stream of the perceptual Real than the Reality Studio of the current regimes would allow. In this sense they were developing a Secular Shamanism. More on this at a future time..

1. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. A Thousand Plateaus (Kindle Locations 3019-3030). A&C Black. Kindle Edition.

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